

Volunteerism Spotlight - Amy Eubanks

Volunteering Rekindles the Joy of Medicine

Amy Eubanks, M.D., an internist at Tanner Medical Group, is passionate about many things – medicine, music, and making a difference in her community. ACP recently spoke to Eubanks about her dedicated service to an indigent care clinic serving West Georgia.

Tell me about the Rapha Clinic.

The Rapha Clinic is a free medical and dental clinic for the uninsured in West Georgia (Carroll, Douglas, Haralson, Heard, and Paulding counties) – an area where there is a need. The clinic is typically open three days a week, and even with the pandemic we saw 1,427 medical patients last year. We do a lot of chronic disease management and some gynecologic care, like routine Pap smears. I am on the medical side, but there is great demand on the dental side of the clinic, too.

We do have some unemployed patients, but so many of our patients are the working poor. They may get paid hourly and just do not make enough to buy insurance. To qualify for Rapha, they can make up to 200% of the federal poverty level and must have been turned down for Medicaid. While we do primary care at the clinic, if they need a referral or more advanced testing, we try to address this through other resources. Most of the patients qualify for the indigent program at Tanner Health System, which is my home organization, and this allows them access to higher level testing.



How did you get involved with the Rapha Clinic of West Georgia?

My pastor spoke to me and told me about the clinic and thought volunteering there might be something that I would be interested in. Within a year, it quickly shifted from volunteering to becoming the medical director – a position I have held for 10 years now.

How have you been able to bring your other passion – music – into the Rapha Clinic?

As a board member, I am involved with the making decisions about the future, the finances, and fundraising. Six years ago, we came up with a concept called the Sound of Medicine, which is a fundraising event for the clinic. It is a series of musical performances where all the groups feature physicians. This allows medical providers to support the clinic outside of regular volunteering. They can come and do something they love and at the same time help support an important ministry in our area. This event, and playing music more broadly is definitely an outlet for me. For Sound of Medicine, I play bass guitar with the group Redeemed, a combination of my regular band, McPherson Street, and a hodge-podge of other musicians I have played with at church over the years.



Why is volunteering with the Rapha Clinic so important to you?

I think we all went into medicine because we were drawn by the science of it, yes, but also the human side of taking care of people. There is a large care gap in our state as Georgia did not expand Medicaid, so there is certainly a need. I believe it is important to connect and take care of your own community – where we work and live. Honestly, I think I get almost get as much benefit from volunteering as the patients do. There is a level of gratitude there that we don't always experience in the busy world of our regular medical practices, and that is refreshing. Day-to-day there is also a lot of pressure in our practices. Fighting insurance companies and perfecting notes can suck the joy out of medicine for me. But I find that working at the Rapha clinic just lets me experience that joy of medicine and helps to remind myself and the other volunteers of why we do what we do every day.